

# News Release

## CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST

10845 RANCHO BERNARDO ROAD, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92127  
VOICE (858) 673-6180, FAX (858) 673-6192, CRS/TTY 711



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT: BRIAN HARRIS 858-674-2984/619-937-1462  
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### **Forest Closures Remain in Effect on the Palomar Ranger District**

The Cedar Creek Falls trailhead, trail and falls area will remain closed as the Forest Service is continuing to work with partner agencies and interested public groups to develop measures that provide for the safety of visitors and quality of resource base. The original closure was put into place on July 9, 2011, and ran through November 8, 2011. A new closure order has been implemented that extends the closure through April 1, 2012. The purpose of the closure is to give the Forest Service time to design and implement a management plan to address issues of public safety, overcrowding, and resource impacts.

The Forest Service is moving ahead with the development of a management plan for the area and will conduct an analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prior to finalizing and implementing the plan. The target for the completion of the NEPA is late March, 2012. A decision on whether or not a permit would be required to hike the trail in the future will not be made until the conclusion of the NEPA process. The permitting system course of action is one that will be studied, while other alternatives will be studied as well.

The closed area includes the trailhead at Thornbush Road, the trail to and from Cedar Creek Falls from the Thornbush Road Trailhead, the trailhead area at Saddleback (located on Eagle Peak Road), the trail from Saddleback, and the specific Cedar Creek Falls site. The closure area extends for ¼ mile on both sides of the trails and the falls.

#### **Orosco Ridge Shooting Area to Remain Closed: General Recreation and Hunting is Allowed.**

The Forest Service is maintaining the closure of the Orosco Ridge Recreational Target Shooting Area for an indefinite amount of time due to public safety concerns and the presence of hazardous materials that may impact the environment at the site. During the time of the shooting range closure, general recreation and access for hunting will remain open throughout the Orosco Ridge area.

The Forest Service has been working with interested parties to develop a plan for the future of public shooting on the District. The San Diego Sheriff's Department conducted a firing range safety assessment and recommended that a number of safety related changes. Additionally, a representative of the National Rifle Association visited the site to provide an assessment of whether the shooting range meets NRA guidelines for safe target shooting. Once funding and resources are available, the Forest Service will continue to work on developing a future plan.

While Orosco Ridge will remain open to the public for other uses during the target shooting area restriction, gates may periodically be closed due to elevated fire risks or weather conditions that could make the road impassible. Members of the public that desire to access the Orosco Ridge area should contact the Palomar Ranger District Office to check on the current road conditions – 760-788-0250.